

Blasting cross-country in James Bay



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Got a heart?

by Will Nicholls

Visiting Val-d'Or recently, I finally had a chance to visit one of my old haunts... the infamous Chateau Louis bar. It no longer serves alcoholic beverages, however. Now it instead helps those who would frequent the establishment for its historical services. But the times they are changing and for the better.

What was once an infamous establishment now helps those with the alcohol problems that the Louis once catered to. Renamed Willie's Place after Willie Hester, a homeless Cree who died in 2013, it's a drop-in centre for Val-d'Or's homeless and almost homeless.

I didn't know what to expect when I arrived there but I wasn't disappointed knowing what my old friend Edith Cloutier would do. I've seen her in her role as executive director of the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre and how she has built that up into an impressive organization that goes beyond other centres in delivering what people need.

Cloutier has given people hope, services and the resources to let them have a chance at a better future. It's something we all want but some have a harder time achieving those goals. Edith's heart and drive always tries to find a way to make it happen.

Willie's Place is just the latest of her projects to help others in need. Visiting the centre with Edith was an experience I needed, and one that a lot of us need. The drop-in centre sees about 70 or more needy people using its facilities every day. Everyone in the centre was friendly and introduced themselves and where they were from without even being told who I was. You could tell they did this as a matter of fact. They would talk to Edith about what was happening in

their lives and thank her for Willie's Place. A few folks were getting some needed sleep in warm place.

Edith told me she wasn't the only one with a big heart. The woman who owns the former Chateau Louis is only charging \$500 a month for rent. Though many others volunteer their time, including users, costs are much higher at around \$10,000 a month.

But Willie's Place is at risk. There is no funding in place to keep operating past March 31 and that is a damn shame. Police say they are issuing fewer tickets for public intoxication. This might be because people have a place to go that gives them hope. A place where they can start to turn their lives around for the better.

In Eeyou Istchee Cree people are generous and raise money to ensure community members who need help get it. At Christmas in Mistissini there is the Wreath of Hope that makes sure every family has enough to eat and there are presents under the tree. The money raised is used throughout the year to ensure basic needs are met.

But when community members are outside the community it seems out of sight, out of mind and not worth a thin dime. We have to go beyond our community and help our people who have lost their way. Let's help them find a brighter future than the streets and find their way back. If you can help as an individual, a band council, an organization or a business, give the Val-d'Or Friendship Centre a call (819-825-6857). Tell them that you are following your heart, you care and here's some money to help your brothers and sisters.

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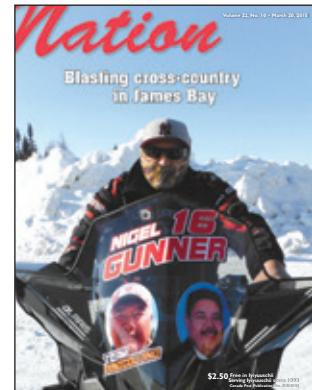
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Nigel Gunner

photo by:
Ernest Webb

The fish, she is small

by Sonny Orr



One of the most memorable times of my childhood, in the late 1960s, was fishing at the first rapids, the present site of La Grande I. This special annual harvest was a day-long event that netted thousands of fish. The rapids, rushing magnificently and wonderfully swift, were full of fish hidden below the swirling eddies of Chisasibi, the Big River.

We arrived by canoe, powered by a loud 20-horsepower Johnson outboard, deftly creeping upriver to the nearest shore landing. It seemed that we were moving fast because of the current and spray, but as the steep rocky shore neared with the bow pointing into the current, we landed and disembarked. Luckily, no one slipped off the steep sides and the effects of vertigo and the odd sense that you were still moving, quickly changed when the fish were hauled in by dozens of people already fishing there.

Trout and whitefish and suckers are the fish of Chisasibi, with the occasional sturgeon and pickerel, or barracudas of the North, as I like to call them. At the first rapids, it was trout day and the nets hauled in from being set moments before were already full to the gills, literally speaking. Everyone had the responsibility of picking up the fish to be tended to immediately. You get used to running around a steep incline catching a wriggling fish pretty quickly. It was a fun event, with the fish guts and eggs and roe collected by the pound, filling large bowls with the healthy foods we ate, now called omega oils. The fish were so fat and healthy.

A smorgasbord of fish followed the continuous harvesting of trout, smoked and dried fish, fried fish, boiled fish, slow-cooked fish guts, crispy fire cooked on a stick, fish pancakes, and on

and on for the next few days. If Forrest Gump was there and was into fish, he could go on and on, until the fish run settled down to its normal pace, and the people went home, sated with fish and happy.

One year, large barges the size of offshore drilling rigs appeared on the horizon at the mouth of the river. They immediately became grounded in the soft sandbars and settled for the winter. That winter, a road was carved out and massive machines made their way upriver, to start the construction phase of the project of the century, the James Bay project. The following year, when the actual work commenced, there was a change in the waters of Chisasibi.

The river was dammed a few years after, including the first rapids at Chisasibi. At that moment, the salty waters of James Bay made their way inland and changed the river overnight. The fish disappeared, along with the rapids. Green algae, slick and slippery, crept over the granite and remained for quite a number of years, coating the rock. Seals, taking advantage of the instant salinity of the waters, moved up to the first rapids and ate what was once a people's feast.

Today, the "fresh" waters have washed away the algae and the fish have come back to grow in increasing numbers, size and age. The seals are still around, getting incredibly huge, fat and virtually untouched by predators. The fish are back and bigger than ever, feeding off the artificial warmth of the dam and chewed up biomass from upriver. But the river remains too dangerous to fish.

I look at the can of sardines in my hand, with the everlasting slogan "fish, she is small." The fish isn't so small no more.

the Nation is published every two weeks

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

INDIVIDUALS & INSTITUTIONS:

\$60 PLUS TAXES, US: \$90, ABROAD: \$110

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PUBLICATION MAIL #40015005

ISSN #1206-2642

The Nation IS A MEMBER OF:

THE JAMES BAY CREE

COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY,

CIRCLE OF ABORIGINAL

CONTROLLED PUBLISHERS,

MAGAZINES CANADA

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We acknowledge the financial support of the
Government of Canada through
the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of
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"I thanked the companies that gave us the work in the past and the many good workers I had. I also thanked the people who were there, my family and friends.

"In my speech I said this kind of work takes you away from home a lot. Sometimes we would have to go to northern Ontario and we

"In the beginning, Chibougamau was a mining camp that became a mining town. Back in 1960, there was a lot of work in exploration and for our people. There was a lot of bush work like line cutting, geophysics and staking and we got a lot of that work."

would have to travel three days just to get there and then be there for a week, a month or even two months. I mentioned that because I wanted to give my wife special thanks for looking after our family while I was away," said Bosum.

Looking back at his life and success in the industry, Bosum said he never went very far in school so he took the work he was able to get. He wanted to tell the youth that mining jobs are the kinds of jobs that they can get and, if they finish their education, they can get better jobs in the field. Had the kinds of training programs for Crees existed when he was young, he said he probably would have become a heavy machinery operator.

"I wanted to tell the youth, their parents and grandparents, because I see some young people go to school for training and then they fail or quit because of some difficulties or something else. I wanted to tell that if I knew in the past, in the early days, that if I had someone behind me like my grandparents or parents, sisters and brothers and many friends, that if you stand with your sons or daughters when they go to school for an education or training, that they know that you are behind him, they will not quit," said Bosum.

"They need that push and that love."

Celebrating a lifetime in mining

Oujé's Sam Bosum recognized for his success in the industry

by Amy German

In the late 1950s, a teenaged Sam Bosum began helping his father and brother in the bush as they and many other Crees from Oujé-Bougoumou, Mistissini and Waswanipi began working in the mining industry. It was there that he first learned the tricks of the trade that would lead him down the road of a lengthy and fulfilling career. It was for this that Bosum, now 73, was honoured with the Skookum Jim Award for his lifetime achievement at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) annual convention in Toronto on March 2.

"I have spent most of my life in this business, since I learned how to work," Bosum laughed. "In the beginning, Chibougamau was a mining camp that became a mining town. Back in 1960, there was a lot of work in exploration and for our people. There was a lot of bush work like line cutting, geophysics and staking and we got a lot of that work," said Bosum.

Following his kin, Bosum said he learned how to operate the geophysical equipment used for line cutting at a young age and then proceeded to work in explorations for the Campbell mine for almost 10 years. After that, Bosum began work as an actual miner.

"I worked as a miner for eight years in Chapais and four years in Chibougamau, starting at the lowest level. You climb up from there, right to the top. But I got a little tired after 12 years and I kept thinking about the bush life that I used to love working in so I decided to go back to that work," said Bosum.

In 1984, Bosum founded his first company, Native Exploration Services, which he has run for the last 31 years. Bosum's company takes on all kinds of contracts in Quebec, Ontario and Newfoundland, including line cutting, staking, mineral exploration, geological and geophysical surveys, and using explosives.

"Mining exploration works like the stock market, it goes up and down. Sometimes there is not that much work and other times there's a lot. In the last two years there have been very few jobs, but it will go back up again," Bosum observed.

Looking back at his career, which also includes stints as chief, deputy chief and a band councillor of Oujé-Bougoumou, Bosum said his success in the min-



Sam Bosum and Jim MacLeod

courtesy of Gaston Cooper and Air Creebec

ing industry is due in part to having a great team of individuals whose quality work kept the jobs coming in.

"To be a Cree in that business for so many years, I guess I have done a very good job for the many companies that I worked for and that's what this award is for," said Bosum.

Bosum said he had a lot of help from his community in the past as well as the community's leadership, which helped him get obtain a number of contracts.

But what he enjoys most about working in the mining industry is working in the field or the bush.

"Being a Cree, I was born and raised in the bush by my grandparents. Then, when I got a bit older I stayed with my parents. I learned a lot at a young age because I had a lot of love from my grandparents. They used to take me in the canoe and go all over the place, setting up things," said Bosum.

"That is why I left the mines to work in the bush again because this work is always in the bush where you get to stay a couple of days or weeks or months."

When Bosum accepted his award at the PDAC event, many of his peers in the mining industry were attending as were a large number of Crees from the Cree Mineral Exploration Board and the Cree Regional Authority, including Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come.

Given only two minutes for his acceptance speech, Bosum said he later told his wife that he had never been given a time limit to speak before, especially when he was Chief. He said he probably spoke for at least three minutes, but nobody stopped him.

Fighting for Willie

Val-d'Or's homeless day centre struggles to obtain funding to stay open

by Jesse Staniforth

Many people in Val-d'Or agree that Willie's Place is doing great things for homeless people and non-homeless people alike. But the day centre that opened on December 22 was funded with pilot-project money, and the financing runs out on March 31. The funding gap has organizers scrambling to keep a good thing going.

"We have frontline workers and we provide basic coffee and some services," said Edith Cloutier, Executive Director of Val-d'Or's Native Friendship Centre. Additional services include a nurse who visits once a week as well as social services representatives to help clients access services.

The drop-in centre is named after Willie Hester, a well-known figure among the homeless in Val-d'Or before his death in 2013. The basic cost to pay rent and run the centre is \$10,000 per month, Cloutier said.

In return, the past three months have seen fewer police calls and tickets issued for disturbing the peace or public drunkenness. Researchers are documenting these impacts. They are meeting with Val-d'Or's mayor, chamber of commerce, and chief of police, as well as the head of the hospital's emergency room in order to learn about what effects Willie's Place has had on different aspects of city life.

It's part of a longer study that the Friendship Centre has conducted since last summer on homelessness and Aboriginal people. Over the past five or six years, Cloutier said, visible Aboriginal homelessness in Val-d'Or has been on a steady upswing.

"We're not used to seeing people who leave the communities in that context," she said. "At one point people would go through to Montreal, but



Willie's Place

now Val-d'Or has become one of the first stops. It's a mix of Cree and Algonquin people, mainly, and we understand many are in the city because of poverty. There's the issue of rejection [in home communities], and the issue of people who are coming out of jail. There are different issues but we'll have a better picture from this research project."

The Friendship Centre, in collaboration with emergency homeless shelter La Piauvre and other local organizations, recognizes that Willie's Place is one approach to helping support people on the streets – and hopefully help get them off the streets into homes, apartments, and more stable lives.

"We had over 35 of what we call Willie's Members attend an afternoon community information meeting," she explained. "We were overwhelmed. We asked people what the place means to them and they said, 'It's not just a

warm place, it's a safe place to go.' They said it's like a command post. Before they were scattered around town and really never had an idea what was going on in the community of homeless people. People worry about one another. They want to know where their friend is, and they hope he isn't sleeping outside in the freezing cold. They take care of one another, and Willie's Place has become a gathering place for them."

Cloutier said that though the space is open to all homeless people, cultural and spiritual aspects are integrated into its programming to help Indigenous people feel more at home.

"When you have that cultural identity connection, that's really special – it's like a family. People call each other 'brother' and 'sister.' The connection is strong and it provides a lot of hope for some of our people in terms of seeking a better life."

However, everyone is aware that the March 31 funding end-date is coming soon.

"Of course people are worried that it's going to close," she said. "I

on the more material side. When I gave that report to the meeting of Willie's Members, they said, 'Yes, the Grand Chief, but that's not enough. You have to send it to each

ing on that. It will be sort of a joint letter – not just from the Friendship Centre and the executive director, but also the people who come to Willie's Place."

"They want to know where their friend is, and they hope he isn't sleeping outside in the freezing cold. They take care of one another, and Willie's Place has become a gathering place for them."

asked Romeo Saganash to support us in the political process. He helped us send a letter to Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, and to Air Creebec, which supported us

Chief of each community.' That's their recommendation. Not just Cree Chiefs, but Algonquin Chiefs also. They want to contribute in signing the letters, so we're work-

Some funding is coming in through the City of Val-d'Or, and Cloutier noted that the Homelessness Program that helped fund Willie's Place to begin with has surpluses this year. But she recognized that much more work remains to keep the centre open.

"If we close on March 31 we're very worried about what kind of impact it's going to have on all the work that we've done in such a short time," she said. "Some might say it's an expensive project, but if it saves lives, it's worth it."



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Stornoway stumbles

Despite a glowing presentation from Stornoway Diamonds of their diamond-mine project at the recent Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) conference in Toronto, Cree attending the conference were not pleased.

Stornoway's presentation failed to make any mention of the Cree people, agreements or businesses. One Cree told the Nation the closest the company came to us was to say the mine was in the Otish Mountains, but never mentioned the area is part of Mistissini's traditional lands.

Board of Compensation and CreeCo president Jack Blacksmith

felt the Cree people were slighted by the omission. Another Cree, who requested anonymity, said it felt like the old days when the mining industry pretended we didn't matter, didn't exist or need to be acknowledged.

They hope Stornoway will remember that positive relationships with local Cree communities is a key element to the success of their mine on Cree lands.

Conservatives claim grievances settled

According to a new report, *In Bad Faith: Justice at Last and Canada's Failure to Resolve Specific Land*

Claims, the federal Aboriginal Affairs department has used "misleading" and "false" statements to claim success in dealing with historical grievances known as specific claims.

Over 100 First Nations chiefs, tribal council heads, research directors, NDP leader Thomas Mulcair, NDP MPs and non-government organizations responded with a letter sent to Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

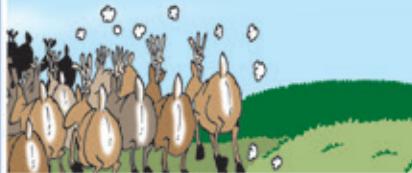
The report said the "Justice At Last" policy to deal with specific claims has been a failure. Aboriginal Affairs is going to terminate program funding for Justice at Last based on "false statements" that the department has met its objectives.

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I USED TO DO A COMB-OVER, BUT THEN I DECIDED TO JUST EMBRACE IT.



© Chad Carpenter



Snow racers blast cross-country in James Bay

written by Joshua Grant photos by Theresa MacLeod and Ernest Webb

The last couple weekends have been busy for snowmobile enthusiasts in the James Bay region with two major cross-country races: one as part of the Festival Folifrets in Chibougamau on February 26 and the annual Mistissini Cross-Country on March 6-8.

The 49th edition of the Folifrets Festival and its cross-country snowmobile competition saw around 60 racers compete for \$20,000 in prizes in Pro long track, Sport long track, Pro sprint, Sport sprint and a Vintage division for sleds built in the year 2000 or earlier.

The pro track for the event covered 345 km, starting and ending at the Centre de santé et des services sociaux de la Baie-James in Chibougamau, with relay stations at Mistissini, a Goldcorp site, Oujé-



Bougoumou and kilometre 210 on route 167.

Dave Allard took home first place in Pro class, completing his race in 3:22:44 and rounding out the top five were Nigel Gunner, Benjamin Dufour, Jeremiah Capissit and Conrad Mianscum.

In the sport division, the snowmobile-cross covered 185 kilometres and was completed in 2:29:30 by first place finisher Martin Paquet, followed by Jean-Claude Cooper, Patrick Lapointe, Simon Imbeault and Sébastien Neeposh. Eric Coon Come, Joseph Coon and Brian Coonishish finished in 6th, 8th and 10th position respectively with only 22:26 separating the top 10 competitors.

Sprint competition recorded the time it took the snowmobilers to cover the distance from the relay station at Oujé-Bougoumou back to Chibougamau and the Pro competition was again championed by Allard in a time of 1:06:30 with Gunner, Dufour, François Paré and Capissit completing the top five. Patrick Lapointe won the Sport Sprint from the Gold Corp. relay station to Chibougamau in a time of 31:46, trailed by some familiar faces in Martin Paquet, Jean-Claude Cooper, Sébastien Neeposh and Eric Coon Come.

The Mistissini Cross-Country invitational event also offered some serious prize money to its competitors. Up to \$17,000 in cash prizes were spread across a Men's Open Pro/Semi Pro division, racing approximately 290 kilometres, and Men's Open Fastest Sprint, based on the fastest lap time, as well as a Women's Category and a division for beginners, covering roughly 72 kilometres.

Seven Cree competitors completed the course in Men's Semi



Pro/Pro action, with Conrad Mianscum taking first place, clocking in at 3:32:28. Brendon Coon placed second with a time of 3:35:34 and David Neeposh finished in third at 3:29:54 +8 minutes for a course infraction. Fourth to seventh consecutively went to Benoit Longchap, Sébastien Neeposh, Brien Coonishish and Mark RabbitSkin.

Winner of the Women's Category was Laurie Ann Neeposh who completed the 72-km course in just over an hour and 20 minutes. Neeposh's official time was 1:22:58 while Dorianne Bosum took second

with a time of 1:26:14 and third-place Shania Maggie Mianscum only 41 seconds behind at 1:26:55. Anilya Coon and Jewels Coon Come also competed in the Women's division, finishing fourth and fifth.

In the Men's Beginners race, Jonah Coon was able to race past the finish line in under an hour, completing the 72 km in 56:49. Tyrone Longchap placed second with a time of 1:01:41; Jeremy Mattawashish was third at 1:10:14 and Kyle Neeposh fourth, registering a race time of 1:13:32.



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Chibougamau rallye a family affair

written by Ernest Webb

photos by Theresa MacLeod and Ernest Webb

"It's tradition" is how Larry Macleod responded when asked of his participation in the 49th edition of the Chibougamau Rallye.

The gruelling cross-country snowmobile race sees the pro class start in Chibougamau, then make their way to Mistissini and Oujé-Bougoumou, before circling back to the finish line in Chibougamau.

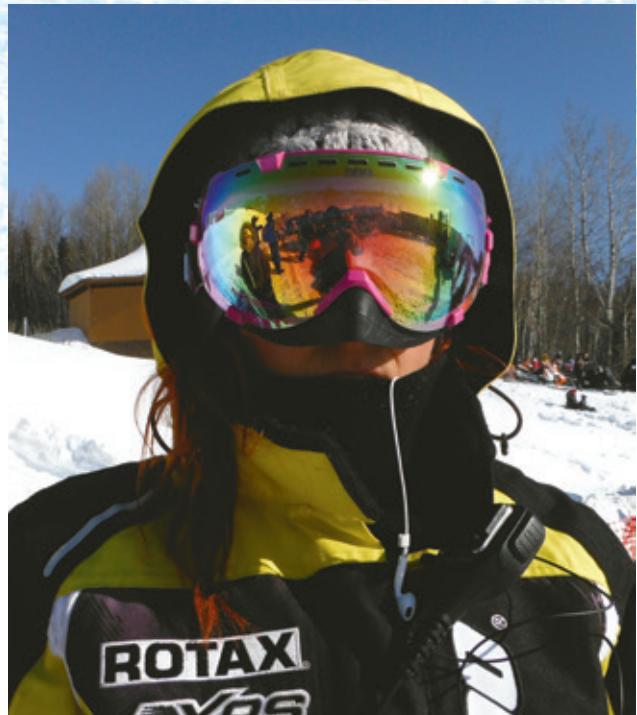
In the days and nights before the 200-mile race, the pilots and mechanics tinker and make adjustments to their sleds. A couple of nights before the race, Macleod, his sons and nephews found themselves like usual in a backyard mechanic shed.

"I try to find more speed from these machines," said Joe Gunner, the team's head mechanic.

Driver Conrad Mianscum, said they were racing in his grandfather's and uncle's memories. The late David Mianscum was among the first generation of racers from Mistissini. While his son Stanley also went on to be a successful racer himself.

It was this collective experience that Conrad Mianscum now uses in his driving. All the tinkering and adjusting proved to be successful when Conrad's cousin, Nigel Gunner, came in second to the winner, Dave Allard.

Considered a success even just to finish, Conrad was happy to have arrived in one piece, surrounded by friends and family and with the warm memory of his grandfather David and uncle Michael.



Awards gala honours women of Eeyou Istchee

by Andrew McClelland

The third Outstanding Cree Women Awards to celebrate women who've made inspirational contributions to Eeyou Istchee were held March 7 in Val-d'Or. Nine women were honoured at the gala, timed to coincide with International Women's Day on March 8.

The award categories celebrate independence, leadership and dedication in a variety of fields. This year, a special Lifetime Achievement Award was given to the late Sally Matthew. Elder Robbie Matthew, Chief of Chisasibi, accepted the award on her behalf.

"The night was great!" said Virginia Wabano, president of the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association (CWEIA). "We sold out all 200 tickets and then a lot of people even came in after that."

"The theme for International Women's Day this year was 'Make It Happen,'" Wabano noted. "And that went nicely with our theme – 'Inspiring our Future Generations'. Hopefully, it will inspire younger women in Eeyou Istchee to make changes and make a difference in their communities in all those areas we try to recognize with the awards."

Three winners shared the Women in Business Award: the Jacob sisters of Waskaganish. Emma Jacob, Sally Whiskeychan and Eva Whiskeychan have oper-



The winners of the 2015 Outstanding Cree Women Awards. (Back row, left to right) Melissa Whiskeychan, Juliet Asquabaneskum, Angela Stewart-Georgekish, Carmen Faries, Kerishia Jolly, and Babbeay Jane Happyjack. (Front row) Eva Whiskeychan, Elder Robbie Matthew, and Dorothy Gilpin. (Absent from the photo are award winners Janie Pachano and Sophie Shem).

ated Jacob's Restaurant since it opened in 1989, and the business is reputed to have the best poutine in Eeyou Istchee. Sally's daughter, Melissa, accepted the award on behalf of her mother. At each award ceremony, the prize is given to a woman in the Cree Nation Region owning 51 per cent or more of a successful business.

Carmen Faries of Wemindji was selected for the Women in

Politics Award. Faries served her first term as councillor for the Cree Nation of Wemindji from 2009 to 2013, and was recently re-elected for another four-year term. Holding degrees from both Queen's University in Kingston and Laurentian University in Sudbury, she also acts as vice-president for the CWEIA.

The evening was filled with musical performances by local singers and musicians. The event

Alice Moore/Ay Designs and Photography

also featured an arts and crafts fair put on by the Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association, who sponsored the entertainment with additional funds from other financial sponsors.

The Outstanding Cree Women Awards are held every two years and are organized by the CWEIA. Congratulations to this year's winners!

Women in Education

Dorothy Gilpin of Eastmain

Women in Public Service

Angela Stewart-Georgekish of Wemindji

Women in Politics

Carmen Faries of Wemindji

Women in Health Promotion and Fitness

Babbey Jane Happyjack of Waswanipi

Women in Arts/Cultures

Janie Pachano of Chisasibi

Women in Business

Sally Whiskeychan,

Eva Whiskeychan and Emma Jacob

Volunteer Award

— Three Categories:

Youth

Kerishia Jolly of Waswanipi

Women

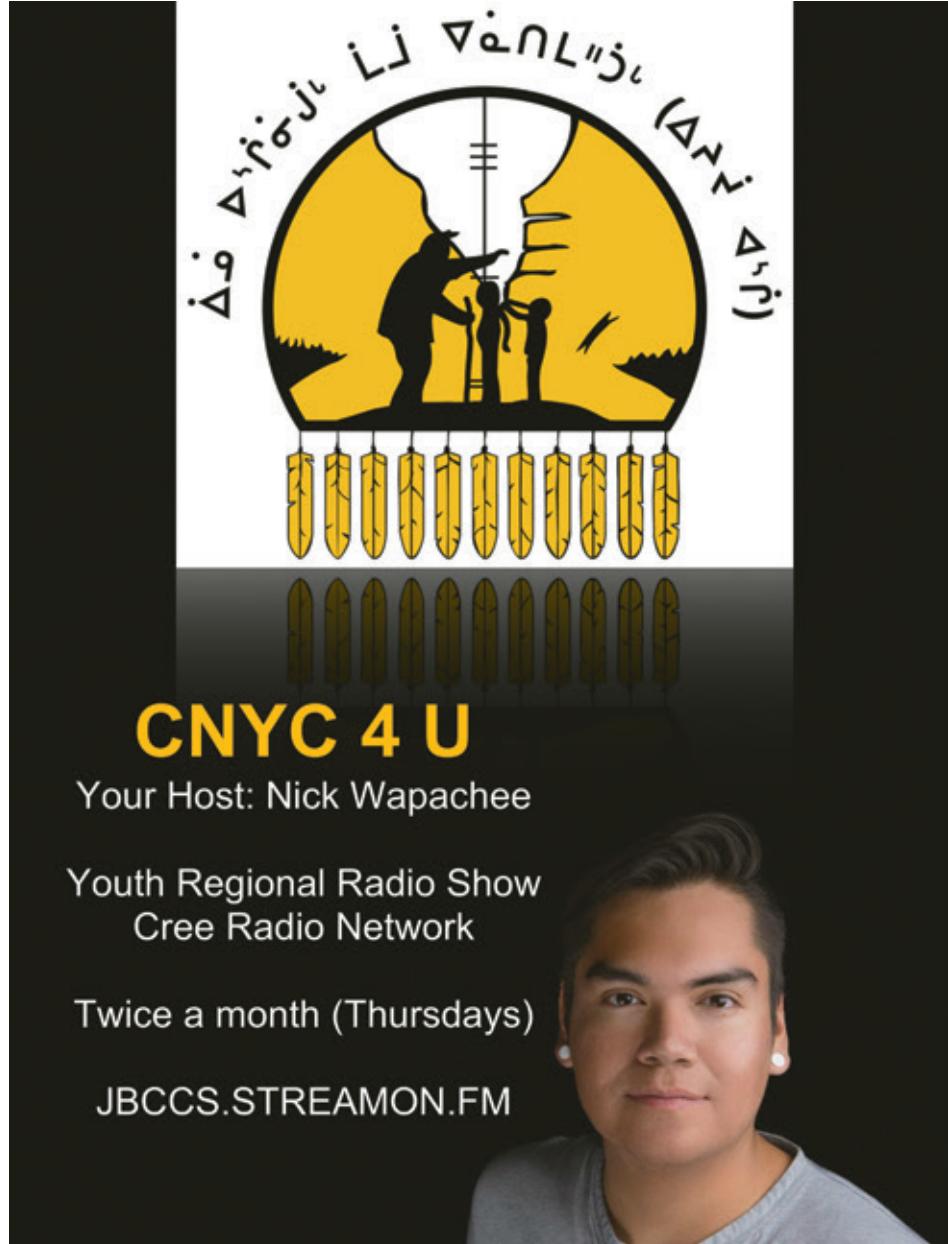
Juliet Asquabaneskum of Wemindji

Elder

Sophie Shem of Whapmagoostui

Lifetime Achievement Award

the late Sally Matthew



CNYC 4 U
Your Host: Nick Wapachee
Youth Regional Radio Show
Cree Radio Network
Twice a month (Thursdays)
JBCCS.STREAMON.FM



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G. C. C. E. I.
40th Anniversary
1974 - 2014

Invitation
Cree Nation Development Conference
"Stronger Together"



C. N. G.
G. N. C.
est. 1978

As you are aware, resource development has been taking place for many years throughout Eeyou Istchee. Too often, this development was carried out with the exclusion, and to the detriment, of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee. The Crees have long fought for the recognition of our collective rights, recognition of the concept of "Cree consent" and acknowledgement of the requirement of "social acceptability" of projects on our Territory. As a consequence, we now have a strong voice and influence on all development activities within our lands.

Having our voices heard has been, and continues to be, an important component in the development of our Nation, our way of life and our values. This is why it is essential for us to fully weigh the impacts, both positive and negative, that development projects will have on all aspects of the lives of our people and on our land. We have a large say and we are a key player in development.

Development potentially touches every aspect of our society, whether it is in the area of employment and economic opportunities or environmental issues. Development can, of course, have important impacts on our traditional activities and our relationship to our land. The effects can be wide-ranging. This is why we need to continue to stand together as a Nation and ensure that all our voices are heard. It is for this reason that we have chosen to hold an important conference on the future development within Eeyou Istchee with the theme "Stronger Together".

This conference will be held in the Cree Nation of Mistissini at the Neoskwasau Complex on November 10 and 11, 2015 and is open to those involved in economic development both at our community and regional levels. Our objective is to benefit from the perspectives of a wide range of people involved in different sectors of Cree society in order to properly prepare ourselves to take full advantage of development while ensuring its appropriate integration into our society.

The Cree Nation has made a commitment to support and participate in the development of the Territory, but this development must be carried out in accordance with our values and our aspirations. Through this conference, we aim to have people develop a greater understanding of the development opportunities before us and their impacts. More importantly, this conference will be about hearing each other, understanding each other and working together.

In the coming weeks and months, you will be receiving more information about the conference. We ask that you help us make this conference a success for the future our Nation.

Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon Come

A quarter century after the Odeyak

Cree Cultural Institute plans to commemorate historic journey

by Jesse Staniforth

The great canoe was called the Odeyak because that word represented the mixing of two cultures: “ode” from Cree and “kayak” from Inuktitut. And even if they weren’t even born when the Odeyak’s crew of 60 Cree and Inuit paddlers arrived in New York City on Earth Day in 1990, Cree and Inuit people remember the event. That was the day that, collectively, the Cree and Inuit made their struggle to stop the Quebec government’s “James Bay II” dam on the Great Whale River an international battle.

Even though Quebec didn’t officially shelve the project until five years later, most people agree it ended when the Odeyak arrived in New York City and its paddlers helped convince the State of New York to pull out of an agreement to buy the energy the project would have produced.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the arrival of the Odeyak at the end of a 1,200 km-long journey that began in Whapmagoostui/Kuujuarapik (where the Odeyak had been built by Billy Weetaltuk, his daughter Caroline, his two sons Morris and Redfern, and his Cree friend Andrew Natachequan). To commemorate the occasion, the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute (ACCI) in Oujé-Bougoumau is holding an event this Earth Day, April 22, in conjunction with the Cree Nation Youth Council.

“Together we’re hosting a commemoration ceremony and also a



mini conference for youth at the same time,” said ACCI’s director of programs, Sarah Pashagumskum. “What we’re aiming for is an event that’s informative, but also aimed at empowerment. Taking up the spirit of the Odeyak journey, reminding people of the spirit behind it, and bringing that into the present as a way of empowering young people.”

The remarks that Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, one of the paddlers, made in front of United Nations headquarters on that day in 1990 are now legendary. “We may have inherited this land from our ancestors,” he said, “but we have also borrowed it from our children.”

“The Journey of the Odeyak is hugely important,” Pashagumskum said. “It’s a symbol of how seriously we take our role as stewards of the

land. It also shows how important our voice can be on an international stage and level. It shows how we’ll always work toward protecting the environment. It’s a concrete example of the way that our Nation has always worked in collaboration with the Inuit Nation.”

Another valuable message from the journey of the Odeyak comes from remembering that it was led and supported by Cree youth, much like the journey of the Nishiyuu in 2013.

“The whole Odeyak journey really was a youth initiative,” Pashagumskum said. “All the people involved at the time – maybe not some of the older people – but the supporters along the way, most of them were youth. They had youth on the journey, all the way from Whapmagoostui with them. The youngest paddler was 16.



There are a lot of parallels between the journey of the Odeyak and the Nishiyuu journey."

Like the Nishiyuu walkers, the Odeyak paddlers passed through many communities of Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, gathering support as they went. And even though at the journey's core was a battle between Northern Indigenous people and the Quebec government, Pashagumskum says that's not the centre of the story as much as it is the inspirational power of communities working together to travel a huge distance in traditional ways for a good cause.

"I think everybody moves on and relationships develop, and really what we're looking back on when we're celebrating the voyage of the Odeyak is the largeness of the whole

endeavour, and how really heroic it was for these Inuit people and Cree people to get together and take this huge long journey and mount this

any memorabilia like the pamphlets that were handed out along the way," Pashagumskum said. "We're looking for people's memories

"WE MAY HAVE INHERITED THIS LAND FROM OUR ANCESTORS," HE SAID, "BUT WE HAVE ALSO BORROWED IT FROM OUR CHILDREN."

massive effort. That's what we're celebrating."

Though the ACCI has the Odeyak in its collection, as well as the Earth Day flag Coon Come carried that day, they're putting the call out for anyone who has other memories they'd like to share with the Cultural Institute.

"What we're missing are pictures of the actual event, or

like that so that we can share them on the event day."

If readers have photos or other memorabilia to help document a major moment in recent Cree history, they can contact the ACCI either through their website (www.creeculturalinstitute.ca/) or by telephone at 418 745-2444.

Planning an economy

Transforming Eeyou Istchee while upholding cultural and traditional values

by Will Nicholls

No one knows what to expect when they hear the words social economy. Is socialism rebranding itself or just getting its act together? The Social Economy Conference of Eeyou Istchee tended to feel like the second assumption. Like many people living in Canada when you hear co-host Alfred Loon say, "Social economy is by the people for the people," alarms bells tend go off. Then participants were reassured when he added, "The community works together to find solutions for community economic challenges."

Indeed social economy is the part of life that not only responds to our needs, the community's needs but requires taking "the economy into our own hands." Loon made it even more clear when he said, "Social economy is how I best describe this. There might not be a huge market for a particular product or service, but there is a viable need such as for childcare, radio stations, arts, tourism and even telecommunications. We make positive change in our community by our business and if it makes tons of money, so be it."

Social economy is not just looking for a profit but what will benefit the community. In his opening statements Loon said, "Social economy projects and businesses create sustainable, rewarding jobs that contribute to the quality of life and well-being of individuals and the community as a whole by upholding the cultural and traditional values of the Eeyou of Eeyou Istchee."

It includes friendship centres, daycares, the Cree Board of Health and Social Service, the Cree School Board, the Cree Trappers



Association, youth councils, and so on. They are all organizations and businesses that benefit and enhance the life of a community.

"This doesn't mean that social economy has to be poor; it means we make more than just money," said Loon. He said there are many "people who have a strong interest in business development but their reason to create a business is not merely for profits but in other tangible benefits that come from helping out a community."

Other presenters emphasized that social economic entrepreneurship can be the foundation of a lasting business model.

Cree Elder Dianne Reid said part of the mandate was "to support the consolidation, experimentation and development of new niches and projects." She said such projects and businesses would pursue "collective wealth and sustainability without compromising the cultural and traditional values of the Eeyou of Eeyou Istchee."

She said in the past the Cree were a matriarchal society but Indian Affairs changed that to a patriarchal chieftainship. In the past Cree learnt through an apprenticeship system but that has changed

today. Looking at Cree population demographics, a shift will have to be made towards self-employment. Reid said the social economy combined with traditional knowledge and values will assist in this process as it means each individual would have pride in their talents, creativity and capacity.

The March 5-7 conference grew out of the Cree Social Economy Regional Table, which was created following the signing of the Specific Agreement concerning consolidation and development of the social economy in the Cree communities of the Nord-du-Québec region.

Loon said they are putting their money where their mouth is. "Last but not least, we have realized that financing is a challenge for social economy businesses. We thus created the Social Economy Fund, through which eligible businesses can apply for grants ranging from \$500 for small micro projects to \$10,000 as a support for a feasibility or business plan. We are still accepting applications, so come talk to me if you're interested."

Alfred Loon can be reached at the Montreal office of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) at 514-861-5837.



Andrew Marshall, In.Business student

School for music moguls

Innovative Cape Breton business program engages young people

by Amy German

Ever wondered what it would be like to manage a band and make money in the music industry? Well now you can have a taste of that life, thanks to a free app produced by a successful Aboriginal youth business program.

According to Brian Smith, the National General Manager of In.Business at Cape Breton University (CBU), the app, called Music Mogul, was developed as part of the university's business network for Aboriginal youth and school mentorship program.

Growing in popularity, the app is actually a tool used in this innovative program that integrates social media sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter so that students can collectively learn through a familiar technological medium.

In.Business began four years ago at CBU as a mentoring program for Aboriginal students in Grades 10, 11 and 12. It started with just 30 students and so far 90 have completed the program. With support from the federal government, the program is now expanding across the country in partnership with the University of Winnipeg, Yukon College, Nipissing University and Vancouver Island University.



Mariah Drever, In.Business student, Jonny Stevens, Revolve Branding & Marketing, Brad Paul, In.Business Peer Mentor

According to Smith, In.Business creates mentorships between students and Aboriginal business people. However, save for a few conferences that the participants have to attend, much of the learning is done virtually.

Though each student is assigned a mentor, much of the work is done in groups. Together the students tackle challenges that are straight out of your average business textbook but applied to scenarios that the participants research on their own.

"We could have the students go out and find a product and discuss its promotion, like what would be the best way to promote it and what would be the target market or demographic. It could be something as simple as

giving them a scenario in the newspapers and having them write a paragraph on whatever the business aspects are of whatever the story is," said Smith.

According to Smith, these challenges can take anywhere from an hour to a day to accomplish. Once a group has finished, their work is posted in the designated social media group where it is discussed with their peers, mentors and peer-mentors (previous participants of the program).

Smith said the participation of peer-mentors is an added bonus as the students get the perspective of someone who was once involved in the program and has now moved on to either a college or university program.

Smith said the program is usually about six months long with new projects assigned every few weeks, covering marketing, the stock market and banking for business. The fact students get to play a game as part of their assignments is an added bonus.

"One of the things that we really noticed is that students are really familiar with the tools that they are using like Facebook, so we started thinking about what we could come up with that they would be interested in. Many are interested in music, smartphones and playing games, so we developed the Music Mogul app. It's a game that allows the students to play the role of a band manager," said Smith.



With Music Mogul, the player starts out with \$1000 with the objective of increasing the band's fan base in Canada, something they do through a series of mini-games. As its fan base grows, the band needs to play larger venues. But in order to do so the band must upgrade its equipment so the player needs to figure out how to advance the band.

"There are learning objectives throughout the game. You can go to the bank but as a high-school student you may not know what interest is so you learn about that. If you borrow \$1000 from the bank, you will have to pay back \$1100. The app addresses what interest is and how you would have to pay it back. So now you can borrow money to buy new gear as well as merchandise and decide how much of a markup you want on the merchandise," said Smith.

The game is integrated into the program as students are given challenges that allow them to see how real-life scenarios would play out when making adjustments to how they carry out business for their band. An example of this is how the game shows players how markup can work and how to maximize profits through making the right price adjustments.

Students will then be asked to post screen shots of what happened in the game when they were asked to use low, medium and high markup so that they can see how a market responds to different kinds of pricing.

"So there is a sweet spot where you can mark it up to the point where you are maximizing the benefit of that product and this is supply-and-demand knowledge," said Smith.

Based on how managing an actual band works, the game is very realistic. For more authenticity, it features music from successful

Aboriginal artists like A Tribe Called Red, Joey Stylez and Elisapie Isaac.

The more fans a band gains, the more money they earn at concerts and with that money they can pay back loans faster. It's the player's responsibility as the manager to pay the musicians' salaries. This gives them an understanding of how to manage employees when it comes to salary increases while looking at things like the cost of touring for a month and preparing income statements.

Smith said there are actually two ways to win the game – either by having their band tour all 39 cities in the game or by making a million dollars.

So far the program has seen results. Of the 90 students who participated, 69 finished the program. As that group had 30 students that were in Grade 12 and graduating, 26 have gone on to pursue post-secondary studies at a university or community college with 13 out of that 26 pursuing business programs. By this fall, the program will be up and running for 300 students across Canada and 50 mentors.

Public Notice

Ministère du Développement durable,
de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre
les changements climatiques

BASSIN VERSANT ST-MAURICE

AN ACT TO AFFIRM THE COLLECTIVE NATURE OF WATER RESOURCES AND PROVIDE FOR INCREASED WATER RESOURCE PROTECTION, CQLR c C-6.2

Notice is hereby given under Section 15 of the *Act to Affirm the Collective Nature of Water Resources and Provide for Increased Water Resource Protection*, CQLR c C-6.2, that the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change confirms the approval of the Bassin versant St-Maurice water Master Plan.

For more information, please contact the Bassin versant St-Maurice at 819 375-6756 or visit its Web site: www.bvsm.ca.

Marcel Gaucher
General Manager, Water Policies

Québec 



Winning the battle with tuberculosis

Eeyou Istchee TB rates remain among the lowest in Native communities

by Amy German

While the prevention and control of tuberculosis may not immediately come to mind when pondering home grown success stories, because control of the disease was so effectively carried out in the region, Eeyou Istchee has now one of the lowest TB rates amongst Indigenous populations of North America.

According to Dr. Kianoush Dehghani of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), like much of Indigenous communities of North America, Eeyou Istchee suffered “terrible epidemics of tuberculosis” or TB during the 19th Century and first half of the 20th century. With little access to medical care for those living in Indigenous communities at that time, tuberculosis claimed the lives of many.

Dehghani defines TB as an infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria that usually affects the lungs though it can also affect other parts of the body such as the spine, bones and lymph nodes.

“Symptoms of TB can include a bad cough (that lasts more than few weeks), coughing up blood, losing appetite and weight loss, weakness or tired-

ness, sweating at night, fever and chills. People with untreated TB become very sick and will look as though they are wasting away. This is why in the old days TB disease was also called “consumption”. If not treated, TB can be fatal,” said Dehghani.

At that, she said that not all forms of TB are actually contagious. TB of the lungs and the breathing (respiratory) system is known to be contagious. However, TB of the lymph node or spine is not contagious. Patients with TB of the lung and the breathing system, can transmit the infection to other people around them through the air by coughing, sneezing, speaking or singing. TB is especially contagious in overcrowded houses with poor ventilation or air flow. TB is not transmitted through shaking hands, touching or kissing.

Fortunately, very effective treatments TB are available when necessary. Dehghani said that patients usually have to take two to four TB medications for 6 to 12 months and must be followed closely by health care workers during the course of their treatment.

“TB patients who do not take their treatment regularly



Dr. Kianoush Dehghani of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB)

can have worsening of their TB disease and can also develop TB disease that is resistant to the usual treatment. Resistant TB is very difficult to treat. This is why the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that health care workers (community health workers, nurses and doctors) support the TB patients to stay on treatment until they’re cured,” said Dehghani.

While there may not be much published specific information on TB in Eeyou Istchee prior to 1980, Dehghani said that based on narratives from Elders and some information from Health Canada, TB disease was common in the region.

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975 gave Crees control over delivering their own health and social

services through the development of the CBHSSJB in 1978. Soon after, the Public Health Module at the Montreal General Hospital's Community Health Department started to carefully keep track of important health conditions like TB in Eeyou Istchee. The Module also started several important TB services in Eeyou Istchee with the collaboration of CBHSSJB's local health care workers.

These TB stopping services included: 1) tracking down individuals with active TB and treating them and their affected contacts; 2) administrating BCG (bacilli Calmette-Guerin) vaccination to newborn children to prevent TB meningitis, and 3) finding and treating people with latent TB to prevent reactivation of TB disease.



la Convention de la Baie James et du Nord québécois

Comité d'examen des répercussions sur l'environnement et le milieu social

Environmental and Social Impact Review Committee

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Public Hearings in Nemaska and Chibougamau Whabouchi Mining Project

COMEX announces a public hearing on the Whabouchi mining project, which involves the development of a spodumene deposit, located 30 km east of the Cree community of Nemaska. COMEX will hear the people wishing to submit written comments or to express themselves on the project during these two sessions:

MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2015 IN NEMASKA

At 2:00 PM at the Nemaska Sports Complex

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2015 IN CHIBOUGAMAU
At 7:00 PM at the Chibougamau Golf Club

Information on these public hearings and on the project is available at: <http://comexqc.ca/en/>

For more information, please contact the COMEX by phone at 418 521-3933, extension 4810, or via e-mail at secretariat.comex@mddelcc.gouv.qc.ca

According to Dehghani, TB rates in Eeyou Istchee dropped dramatically after this to the point that between 2005-2010 the TB rates were actually 20 times lower than the rates in 1980. Fast forward to 2015 and the Cree of Eeyou Istchee have actually achieved one. In fact, one of the one of the lowest TB rates amongst Indigenous populations within North America. , according to the World Health Organization (WHO) criteria, Eeyou Istchee is now considered a low incidence region for TB.

"We think that this dramatic achievement is likely due to the TB prevention and treatment actions since the early 1980's and the improving socioeconomic status of Cree People of Eeyou Istchee after the James bay and Northern Quebec Agreement," said Dehghani.

To that end, Dehghani is presenting working part time at the WHO studying tuberculosis trends among Indigenous peoples in selected First Nations and Inuit populations of Canada, the United States and Greenland. The purpose of this study is to further shed light on exact health system and socioeconomic determinants that have been responsible for changes in TB trends in these indigenous populations in geographical North America. This study will actually look at why the rates fell in populations like the Cree of Eeyou Istchee but stayed high or even rose in other Indigenous populations.

"I hope the study will reveal important information regarding

key measures associated with long term TB control, which will be important to prevent resurgence of TB in our region in the future," said Dehghani.

TB may no longer be a major health problem in Eeyou Istchee, however, according to Dehghani, TB is still an important disease in many parts of the world affecting millions of people every year. In fact, in 2013 alone, about 1.5 million people died of TB, mainly in developing countries. Those that are most at risk are mainly poor people in poorer countries of the world – mainly in Asia and Africa. This is because poor people tend live in over crowded houses, have difficulty affording healthy food, work in poor conditions and have difficult access to quality health services. , At the same time, Dehghani emphasized that anyone can be affected by the disease.

Those in Eeyou Istchee who have survived some of the TB outbreaks of the past, may have a form of TB infection known as dormant (sleeping) or latent TB infection. "In Eeyou Istchee, as active TB disease was more common in old days, many individuals became and infected and still live with latent TB," said Dehghani.

"People with dormant or latent TB have the TB bacteria living in their body, but the bacteria are not active and not causing TB disease (they can be considered "sleeping"). People with latent TB are not sick and not contagious," said Dehghani.

Explaining this further, she said that when a person comes into contact with someone with active tuberculosis a number of things can happen. In some instances nothing will happen and nothing will be transmitted, sometimes the person may contract active TB disease, some-

or PPD). People with a positive test may need treatment for latent TB. Usually this is 9 months of therapy with one anti-TB medication," said Dehghani.

At the same time, she said that not everyone with latent TB needs treatment and not everyone with latent TB should have

"Symptoms of TB can include a bad cough (that lasts more than few weeks), coughing up blood, losing appetite and weight loss, weakness or tiredness, sweating at night, fever and chills."

times a person will become infected by the TB bacteria but not develop TB disease and this is what is defined as latent TB.

Over time, Dehghani said that approximately 5-10 percent of patients with latent TB will develop TB disease when the bacteria reactivates or wakes up.

"The risk of TB reactivation in individuals with latent TB is highest during the first 2 years after contact with person(s) with active TB disease of the lung. This is why it is important to examine contacts of any person with TB disease of the lung, and test them for latent TB. The test for latent TB is a skin test called tuberculin skin test (TST

treatment because the treatment has side effects that include liver problems and so a physician must weigh the risks against the benefits when it comes to determining a treatment plan for that particular case. There are groups of individuals with certain kinds of health problems that are at higher risk of developing active TB from latent TB and they include those with diabetes, kidney failure, HIV infection or individuals receiving medications that lower body's immunity (like certain chemotherapy and corticosteroid treatments).

For more information on TB, please visit your local clinic.

The Story Behind the Story

Dispute within Misissini's Living Water Assembly prompts lawsuit

by Roy Shecapio

The dispute is not one that will go away easily. A litigation was filed by the plaintiff Johnny Dixon, and the Board of Directors of Living Water Assembly affiliated with PAOC have taken Pastor Joseph Blacksmith to court. The plaintiff are claiming that the vote was unconstitutional according to their by-laws. Reverend Joseph Blacksmith the defendant is arguing the people have the right to choose who governs them.

The lawsuit claims that Pastor Joseph Blacksmith called a public meeting in January 2014 to seek community support for his "new vision." The "new vision" referred to in the lawsuit is not to be considered as Pastor Joseph Blacksmith's own vision but one that has existed since the congregational separation of 1990. This landmark initiative which was designed to effect reconciliation, healing, and to promote unity has been longed for, and prayed for by many members of the church community.

Back in November 09, 2000 Paul Thitreault from PAOC had taken steps to effect a solution to the division in the church by outlining a proposal to unite both church groups. One of the requirements of the proposal was to bring in a neutral person from outside the community and installed as an interim pastor. December 13, 2000 meeting of both church groups, a Joint-board was established. January 10, 2001, Mr. Johnny Dixon was appointed by the newly established Joint-Board. Mr.

Dixon's mandate from PAOC was to facilitate the process of unity and reconciliation between the two church groups through a three year window time frame. Mr. Dixon failed to bring about a concrete settlement between the two church groups. His failure was largely due to the fact that he had clearly defeated both the process and his role as a neutral conciliator by becoming the Senior Pastor. Adherents of both church groups had concluded that the proposal to unite both church groups was not done in good faith. As a result, the PAOC Proposal failed leading to a more serious repercussions and deterioration of PAOC relations both in the church and at the community level.

Pastor Johnny Dixon resigned as the Senior Pastor March 27, 2013. Joseph Blacksmith was voted in by the Living Water Assembly congregation as the Senior Pastor April 07, 2013. The congregation was under the direction of Pastor Joseph Blacksmith, including the Board of Directors, and it was his entitlement to take whatever necessary action was needed. One of the divine directives he felt led to pursue was to engage the vision that he felt had been abandoned by the former pastor Johnny Dixon

Reverend Joseph Blacksmith was hospitalized December 2013 for an acute liver infection requiring medical intervention. He was not involved in a major rehabilitation

program but was simply required to rest for a period of time.

December 2013, the Board of Directors conducted a series of meetings in the absence of the pastor without the consent or written authorization from the pastor to conduct such meetings as stated in the General Constitution. The Board of Directors (LWA) planned to designate Johnny Dixon as a temporary interim pastor. It appears that the Board of Directors were using his illness to discredit Pastor Joseph Blacksmith when in fact he was fully aware of his situation. Regardless of his health crisis at that time, the office which he holds is worthy of esteem and respect by the Board of Directors as well as the whole congregation. The unfortunate occurrence that the meetings were conducted rather in secrecy without the pastor's knowledge and consent clearly contradicts the essential principles of respect for the office of the pastor. For the record, Johnny Dixon was not re-designated as the pastor in December 2013 as stated in *the Nation*.

The actions of the Board of Directors were not well received by the congregation, and raised more questions as to who authorized the meetings without their own pastor being notified. Pastor Joseph Blacksmith actually did receive a notice to one of the said meetings about 10 minutes prior to commencing with a directive to attend coming at a most inconvenient time when he was preparing to retire for the night.

The growing discontentment eventually escalated to discussions of disaffiliation from PAOC and was further encouraged by many members of Living Water Assembly. Pastor Joseph Blacksmith took this as a mandate from the congregation to disaffiliate from PAOC. A meeting was scheduled at the complex January 20, 2014. The whole purpose of the meeting was to look at disaffiliation and to allow people an opportunity to participate in the discussions and that in essence would allow individuals to make a better informed decision about the focus of the decision to disaffiliate from PAOC. Johnny Dixon as well as some members of the Board of Directors were present at this meeting including associate pastor Bert Mettaweshkum, and had participated in the discussions. At the conclusion of the meeting, and in the hearing of all in attendance, a second meeting was scheduled for February 01, 2014, at which time it was announced that a voting would take place.

On January 31, 2014, the Board of Directors called a congregational meeting without Pastor Joseph Blacksmith. The Board of Directors continued to hold secret meetings at the residence of the former pastor Johnny Dixon. It should also be noted that the Board of Directors at that specific period were still under the direction of the Senior Pastor Joseph Blacksmith.

Subsequently following the February 2014 meeting, disgruntled Johnny Dixon supporters as well as the Board of Directors left the church at 304 Amisk Street on their own

accord without any pressure from the congregation or the Senior Pastor. The departure of the Board of Directors left Pastor Joseph Blacksmith with no other option but to appoint a temporary Board of Directors. Since February 2014, Johnny Dixon and his supporters continue to hold church meetings at the Mistissini lodge as well as in the private homes of his supporters. On May 17, 2014 Johnny Dixon was appointed as the interim pastor by his supporters but not by the Living Water Assembly congregation at 304 Amisk Street which is still under the leadership of Pastor Joseph Blacksmith.

The lawsuit claims that Reverend Joseph Blacksmith retained all church documents and files, the plaintiff Johnny Dixon said all attempts to retrieve documents and files from the church office have been unsuccessful. The Plaintiff claims Mr. Blacksmith allegedly had the locks of the church building changed. This is entirely inaccurate, letters were sent to Stella Dixon to return the main computer that she had removed from the church premises. In this matter the new board in a motion directed Pastor Joseph Blacksmith to change the locks because of break-ins into the office of the secretary wherein all filing cabinets were emptied of their contents leaving behind only baptismal and marriage certificates.

The lawsuit claims that the defendant Pastor Joseph Blacksmith organized a reunification march with the other group Perch River Fellowship, this again is entirely inac-



Pastor Joseph Blacksmith

curate. On June 09, 2014, Roy Shecapio, a member from the Perch River fellowship organized the walk with a wooden cross starting from Perch River to the community of Mistissini and to the church. The walk was organized as a symbolic gesture of support to the revived initiative of healing and reconciliation. Many community members both young and old as well as members from both church groups participated in this historic walk. This landmark initiative is perceived by many as a most positive endeavour and was applauded by those who were familiar with the history of the local church.

Regardless of what decisions are made in the court, Pastor Joseph Blacksmith remains hopeful that things will change for the better. The church under his leadership continues to operate with a healthy membership. There is a sense of the presence of God among the people here, we are continually seeing people coming to salvation.

Eagles, Spyders and Ninjas – oh my!

Story and photos by Alexander Reid



Victory Magnum

Racers, roadsters, choppers, dirt bikes, three-wheelers, ATVs, side-by-sides – Montreal's Motorcycle Show at the Palais des Congrès February 27-March 1 was chock-full of motorized magnificence.

The Harley Davidson space was crammed with curious onlookers vying for the opportunity to cop a feel of the 2015 line-up. Notable newcomers include the Street 750 and the Street 500.

With top speed capability barely exceeding 160 km/h for the 750, and considerably less for the 500, the Street is more about looks and smoothness of ride than anything else. Shadowy in colour and relatively low-key for Harleys (read: no chrome!), these new models feature blacked out 750cc and 500cc ver-

sions of the new Revolution X liquid-cooled V-twin engine. The Street puts a refreshing focus on handling performance and fuel-economy, while retaining the signature level of H-D noise pollution (they have been sound-tested them in labs to ensure this).

Already available in Canada, the dark, more restrained look goes a long way in appealing to young urban riders looking to make their first purchase. The Street 750 and 500 are priced starting at \$8,999 and \$8,199, respectively.

The other Harley-Davidson models on the showroom floor were more in line with the classic image of glamorous touring and unparalleled comfort. For most, the name Harley Davidson sets industry standards for innovations in extravagance, style, luxury and decadence. The rest of the 2015 line-up is no exception.

From the rebellious Breakout, to the low-riding clout of the V-rod Muscle, to the easy-going swagger of the creamy Fat Boy Lo; from the new-school luxury of the Freewheeler trike to the trusted old-school pedigree of the Softail series: Harley-Davidson motorcycles are iconic status symbols by nature.

Marketed as high-performance cruisers, the V-Rod Muscle along with the Night Rod Special wipe the floor with competing cruisers thanks to the power of its patented liquid-cooled, dual-cam, V-twin Revolution engine. The original Revolution engine was designed and tested in Germany in partnership with Porsche to meet racing standards. The version residing in the current V-Rod Muscle is the 1,250cc VRSCF, which delivers 122 horsepower. The non-street legal V-Rod Destroyer packs the Screamin' Eagle 1,300cc VRXSC Revolution engine that delivers more than 165 horsepower.

The H-D Street Glide is impossible to miss. This bike features a flaming hot-rod paintjob and an audio system with no less than 12 speakers and two 300-watt four-channel amplifiers, in addition to an infotainment system and a Touchscreen GPS. The Street Glide starts at \$25,219.



Softail Deluxe: the classiest cruiser at the show?

The 2015 H-D Softail Deluxe was perhaps the classiest cruiser at the show. A chromed-out stunner with design style to burn, this new take on the traditional cruiser is made for high-riding city tours, but is less than ideal for covering long distances at high speeds. Its wide-set handlebars necessitate a tiring upright pos-

ture and heavy wind resistance for the driver. Base models start at \$22,179; the CVO version is priced at \$35,439.

To compete with H-D's fully loaded comfort-cruisers, Victory Motorcycles released the 2015 Magnum. Advertised by Victory as their "boldest bike ever," the Magnum is a satisfying big wheel

bagger, which comes complete with a high performance 6-speaker audio system. Starting at \$25,399, the Magnum is available in a variety of flashy retro finishes including magnum red and plasma lime.

Indian Motorcycles' display floor featured the much-anticipated 2016 Indian Chief Dark Horse. An intimidating cruiser heavy on attitude, the Dark Horse dons a matte black finish that eliminates all the chrome save its dual exhaust pipes. It cuts one badass silhouette. Weighing in at 340 kg, the 2016 Dark Horse is the lightest and fastest model in the Chief series and is geared towards customization with dozens of exclusive new mods scheduled to roll out over the next year. Base models start at \$19,799.

The 2015 Indian Scout sports a leaner, slicker look than the Dark Horse, and is equally impressive in its design. A lighter cruiser than the Chief series, the Scout weighs only 250 kg. It features Indian's first liquid-cooling engine, and its 1,100cc V-twin powertrain delivers a solid 100 horsepower. Starting at \$12,199, the Scout is aimed at a similar demographic as the H-D Street 750, however the Scout is both faster and more affordable.

The 2015 Indian Roadmaster is a touring bike that rivals the Honda Goldwing. Its elegant saddle-style seating maximizes driver comfort for a long relaxing ride. At the same time, the Roadmaster leaves a generous amount of space for a passenger and ample cargo room making it ideal for an extended road-trip or a weekend getaway. Base models start at \$31,499. Coincidentally,



Indian Scout



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Honda CRF 250L

Honda is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Goldwing by releasing a special 2015 commemorative edition, also priced starting at \$31,499.

Ducati's new 2015 Scrambler is an urban bike, which prioritizes comfort, style and easy handling above all else. Marketed as a hipster bike that caters to new riders, this bike comes in four trendy variations. Its 803cc air-and-oil-cooled SOHC V-twin engine delivers a mild 75 horsepower, but with an emphasis on excellent fuel economy.

The new Can am-BRP Spyder F3 looks promising. Custom Spyders on display were indeed captivating, but the most eye-popping three-wheel vehicle at the show was undoubtedly Polaris' new Slingshot. Legally considered a "motorcycle," the Slingshot features a 5-speed manual transmission and a 2.4L DOHC Ecotec engine with 173 horsepower allowing the slingshot to go from 0-100km/h in approximately 5 seconds. In terms of safety, the vehicle

has no airbags and its low set, ultra-light carbon fibre body will surely crumple in a collision with an automobile. Therefore, it makes sense that in regions where motorcycle helmet laws apply, drivers and passengers are obligated to wear helmets at all times. Base models start at \$21,999.

For riding off the beaten path, there was no shortage of dirt bikes, ATVs and side-by-sides.

Triumph Motorcycles' new Tiger 800 XCx is a medium-sized adventure bike with off-road capabilities. Riders can configure ABS settings between three driving modes: Road, Off-Road, and the fully customizable Rider Mode. Base models start from \$14,899.

For those seeking a sportier, cheaper alternative, the 2015 Honda CRF250L is an amazingly economical and balanced dual-sports bike, intended for riders who need the versatility of a bike that can deliver sports-level performance both on the road and in the dirt.

Bikes such as the Kawasaki KX250F and the Honda CRF450X are for the dirt-bike purists whose top priority is maximizing off-road competition performance. The 2015 Kawasaki KX250F has a number of substantial improvements on its previous design, including modifications to its exhaust pipe and



RZR 1000XP

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muffler to provide enhanced low-end and top-end power. Alterations in its dual-fuel injection process provide the dirt bike with enhanced mid-range power as well.

Polaris joined Honda and Kawasaki to compete for best ATV at the show with formidable offerings from all companies. The 2015 Honda Rubicon TRX 500 IRS and its big brother, the Rubicon DCT Deluxe both offer riders a tempting 4-wheeled option for off-road utility and/or recreation. The IRS model starts at \$7,799, while the DCT deluxe starts at \$10,999.

Kawasaki's Brute Force 300 is a more compact ATV, but also more affordable, starting at \$4,799. Polaris' Sportsman XP 1000 reigns over the others, with a 952cc 4-stroke twin cylinder engine that produces 88 horsepower and towing capacity of 680 kg. The Sportsman XP 1000 is a monster ATV, whose biggest drawback is its monster price tag, starting at \$13,599.

Kawasaki had some attractive SxS vehicles in their line-up too, such as the two-seater Mule 610 XC, and the four-seater Teryx EPS LE. These SxS's can plow snow or carry passengers and cargo through the wilderness. Whether you're fishing, camping or hauling workers and materials to or from a worksite, these SxS's are built to manage transportation and tough jobs efficiently over unpredictable terrain. The Mule 610 XC and the Teryx EPS LE start at \$8,599 and \$16,999 respectively.

Polaris' Sportsman ACE 570 falls somewhere between the Mule and the Teryx in terms of size, but its chassis admirably blends the sporty essence of an ATV with the capacity and functionality of an SxS. Polaris' Ranger 900 EPS is decidedly SxS by



Ninja H2-R

design and goes toe-to-toe with the Teryx in terms of looks and utility, the Deluxe version surpasses the Teryx in terms of superior performance and add-ons, but also comes with an added cost, with Northstar Ranger 900 EPS Deluxe models starting \$24,199.

And the prize for "most impressive utility vehicle" at this year's show goes to... Polaris, for the 2015 RZR XP 1000 High Lifter Edition!

The bright orange roll bars and dual front-seat configuration distinguish The High Lifter from an ATV in the strictest sense, but the huge tires, centralized body and daring lines tell a different story. The RZR XP 1000 High Lifter comes equipped with all-wheel-drive, and its 999cc 4-stroke ProStar Twin-Cylinder engine delivers 110 horsepower. The ultimate adventure UTV, it carries a cargo-bed capacity of 136 kg and wields enough torque to blast a driver and a passenger across a shallow river, or up a muddy slope even while burdened with supplies and/or heavy gear. The

fully loaded RZR XP 1000 High Lifter Edition sells for \$26,699.

As far as racing bikes go, it wasn't even close. Kawasaki's Ninja H2-R and its street-legal counterpart, the Ninja H2 stole the show to the point where no one even remembers who the competition was.

True to form, these Ninjas are outwardly demonic and terrifyingly fast. The Ninja H2-R is the cutting edge of modern superbike design, its 998cc inline four-cylinder engine employs a variable speed centrifugal supercharger to command an incredible 300 horsepower and a claimed top-speed of 400-420 km/h, which makes it the most powerful motorcycle produced — ever!

The Ninja H2 shares the supercharged 998cc engine, but its horsepower has been reduced to 197. Despite the loss of a hundred horses, the H2 might still be the fastest street-legal production bike in the world, reportedly able to accelerate from 0-100km/h in under 2.5 seconds. The Ninja H2-R and the Ninja H2 are priced at \$55,000 and \$25,000 respectively.



A lull in Wawatay

by Xavier Kataquapit



The Wawatay News newspaper seems to have disappeared. Like the old quote by TS Eliot, the publication went out “not with a bang but a whimper.”

I left Canada in December to head out on a two-and-a-half-month-long voyage to the Far East. I did my best to keep up with the news from home but often that was difficult. When I finally flew back to Canada I was shocked to hear that the Wawatay Communications Society had stopped services in November. They have since restored some of their services but at the moment, the newspaper has not recovered and its staff has not gone back to work.

I grew up reading the Wawatay newspaper and listening to Wawatay Radio. The Cree and Ojibwe word wawatay means “northern lights.” To us on the James Bay coast, it was symbolic as we expected to have our Wawatay newspaper around forever.

Founded in 1974, the publication was one of the oldest and most respected Aboriginal newspapers in Canada. I have come to know many of the editors and writers over the years as the paper featured my column “Under The Northern Sky”. I recall being very proud and excited in the fall of 1998 when then-editor Jody Porter agreed to run my column. Back in those days, I was faxing my weekly columns to her as

email and the internet was still in its early stages.

Wawatay News was actually launched because of the wishes of the Elders in the northern First Nations. I know that people up the James Bay coast depended on the paper and Wawatay Radio to bring them news with a First Nation perspective. It was also very important to us because Wawatay was First Nation media that actually gave us some representation.

It was great to be able to read stories from other First Nations and that drew us closer together. Wawatay gave us many voices and faces. Our Native politicians, leaders, administrators, Elders and First Nation people in general were featured on the pages of Wawatay. I know that many found it very exciting to see pictures of family and friends featured on the pages of Wawatay News.

Wawatay also served to provide us with an historic record in terms of archives. Much of the time First Nation stories in mainstream media have to do with negative realities. Wawatay actually produced positive stories about my people and the accomplishments of so many First Nation people.

When Wawatay first started, there were very few First Nation writers involved, however that changed over the years. People like Joyce Hunter and Lenny Carpenter started their writing

careers at Wawatay News. It felt good to know that my own people had a hand in producing this First Nation publication and that served to encourage more Native people to consider journalism as a career. It also gave us all great pride as First Nation people to see stories written in syllabics in the Ojibwe and Cree languages.

I found it strange that nobody contacted me from Wawatay to let me know that the newspaper service of Wawatay Communications was being shut down. I had no idea and I had been sending my column regularly to the paper. I had to learn of this news on the CBC website.

I want to thank all of those First Nations board of directors, Elders and leaders that have helped to keep Wawatay alive for so many years. Chi-Meegwetch to all those hard-working editors and writers (Native and non-Native) who told our stories over the years.

It is my hope that the board of directors and our First Nation leadership can find some way to keep Wawatay News alive. These are dark times and we need the light that good journalism as a service to the public can provide.

My people have lost a lot in the past and it saddens me to know that such a powerful voice for all of us has been silenced. Let us hope that it is just a lull in the wawatay.



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Maintenance Electrician - Chibougamau, Nord-du-Québec - Surface Services

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